



The
National Intelligence
Daily

Published by the Director of Central Intelligence for Armed Principals Daily

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WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 5, 1975

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APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: SEP 1999

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THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY

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Chile Intensifying Drive Against Extreme Leftist Organizations

The Chilean government has in recent weeks intensified its drive to destroy extreme leftist organizations. It clearly means to push ahead even at the cost of further foreign questions about human rights abuses in Chile.

The government asserts it has shattered a plot by the Communist Party to assassinate President Pinochet and establish a Communist government by force. The party, unlike the other political groups that supported the Allende government, has managed to keep its organizational structure virtually intact, but even so it is not an immediate threat to the government, Security forces [redacted] have arrested a number of Communist leaders in the cities and are holding them incommunicado while searching for more.

In mid-October, the authorities uncovered what appears to have been a

headquarters of the extreme Movement of the Revolutionary Left in a Santiago suburb. Several extremists were killed in the ensuing battle and five more captured. Among those who escaped was Andres Bernal Almona, the leader of the group, who is a nephew of the former president.

The security forces think that Bernal may have been wounded and that he and some of his colleagues are being ordered by the Catholic clergy, including some American nuns now being sought by the government.

The clergy has probably helped during the last few years, but it is uncertain whether they are involved in these latest incidents. High government officials have discussed the problem with Chile's cardinal, but Pinochet does not seem ready to push the issue to the point of completely alienating the Church.

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